

CIRCUITS

NEWS FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS

Dakota Electric launches **Outage App**



Dakota Electric members can now quickly and easily report a power outage right from their mobile device.

their power is going to be re-stored. This app will provide them that convenience."

Developed by MTS of Eden Prairie, the Dakota Electric outage app provides members the ability to not only report a power outage but also receive alerts and updates on the status of their outage. In addition, they can view an outage map and report a street light out with the click of a button.

"We know more and more people are relying on their mobile device during a power outage," said John Thurmes, Dakota Electric's control center manager. "Members want to quickly and easily report a power outage, but more importantly, they want to know when

Thurmes is quick to point out that nothing is 100 percent accurate. Estimated restore time is a best guess based on average restoration times. Each situation is different, and depending on the cause of the outage, restoration times may vary. Users will be notified when estimated restore times change and when power has been restored. So even if you are away from home, you will know when power is back on at your house.

Outage map

The app will also display an outage map with a house identifying the user's

location, as well as color-coded cones showing information regarding outages that affect other locations. Tapping on a cone provides more information about that outage, including number of members impacted and estimated restore time.

Street lights

Stand near a street light and tap "Report a street light out" to use the GPS on your phone to quickly send a report about a street light not working. If the

- continued on page 2

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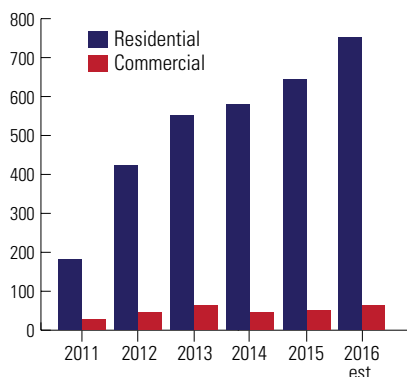
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Upcoming events

New Year's - office closed	Jan. 2
Board Meeting	Jan. 26, 8:30 a.m.

January 2017

5-yr Trends: New Members



2017 construction plans

Dakota Electric's board of directors recently approved the 2017 construction budget and work plan. This year's plan is similar to years past with the majority of time and money spent on new member construction, mainline construction, substations and underground cable replacement.

New member construction

While new member construction continues to be well below levels prior to the economic downturn, Dakota Electric sees a gradual increase that is expected to continue over the next few years. In 2017, the cooperative estimates construction of new lines and connection of service to more than 800 new accounts, which is approximately 100 more than last year.

Mainline construction

Three significant projects taking place this year which require the cooperative to move or rebuild existing mainlines include County

Road 86 near Cannon Falls, Cedar Avenue in Lakeville and Valley Park in Lakeville.

Substation construction

Construction on the new Randolph substation is scheduled to be completed this year. In addition, crews will begin preparation work to replace aging substation equipment. Dakota Electric will continue to connect its substations to the fiber optic cable throughout the county. This fiber communication system is very robust and highly reliable for transporting large amounts of critical data.

Underground cable replacement

Another major component of the construction budget is the replacement of older, failing underground cable. Cable installed in the 1960s and 1970s is reaching the end of its useful life. The goal each year is to identify and replace aging cable in areas most prone to failure in an effort to improve the reliability and integrity of the system.

Dakota Electric outage app (cont.)

street light is broken or down on the ground, that requires immediate attention and you must call 651-463-6201 to report it.

How to download

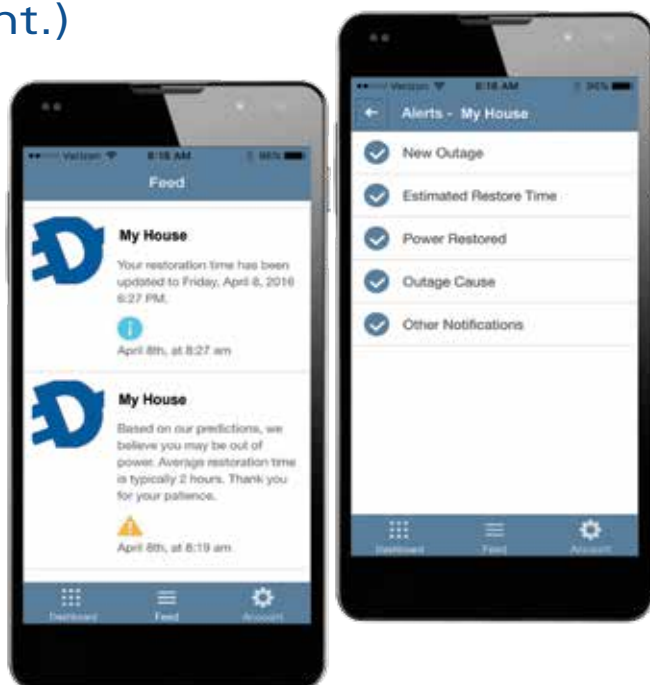
The outage app is free and available in the Apple Store and Google Play. It is compatible with Apple iOS and Android.

Once you have downloaded and installed the app, you must request a code by calling 651-463-6212 or visiting our website at dakotaelectric.com and clicking on "Dakota Electric Outage App" under the Quick Links menu. The code is specific to your account and is required to personalize the app to your residence. Once you enter the code and hit "Subscribe," you can begin to set up your profile and alert notifications.

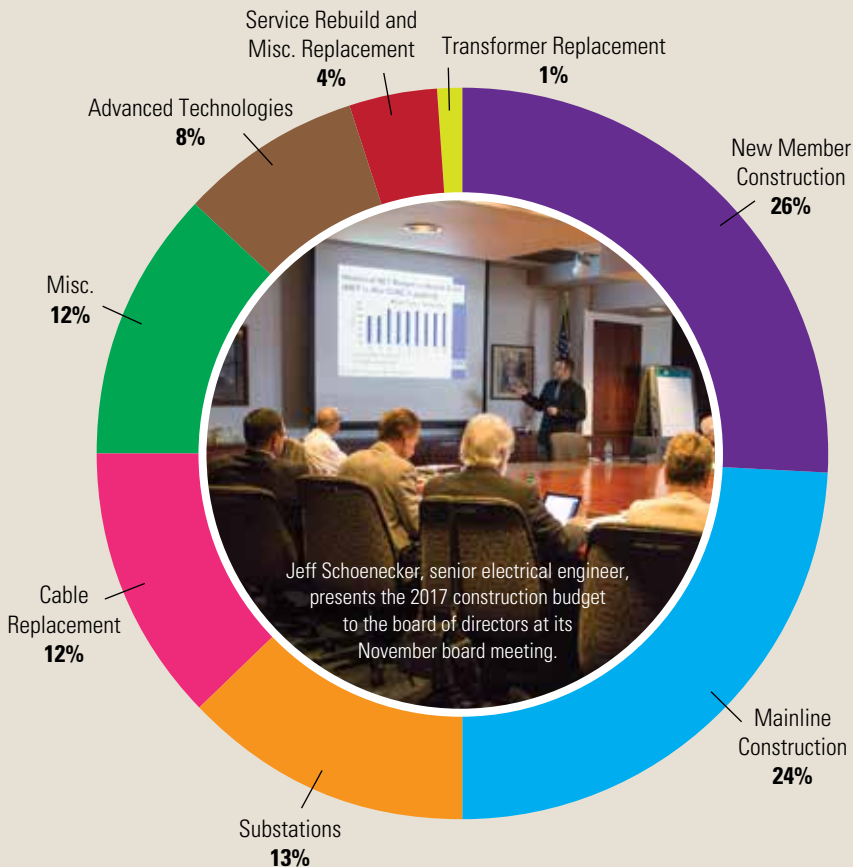
Download the Dakota Electric Outage App today for the latest in power outage information and updates. For questions regarding the app, contact 651-463-6212 or visit dakotaelectric.com.

Important Information

Dakota Electric uses outage reports from members to predict the scope of an outage and possible cause. Without outage reports from our members, we do not know if you are out of power. Therefore, this app may not provide completely accurate outage notification, nor can it be relied upon to avoid property damage due to loss of power. We are unable to accurately predict every outage, and we make no claims or guarantees that this app will spare your property from damage or other harm due to loss of power. Everyone who uses this app is acknowledging its limitations and will not hold Dakota Electric responsible for any damage due to lack of outage notification.



2017 Construction Budget Breakdown



How much energy are you really using?

Now that the holidays are behind us, are you curious to know how much energy your new appliances and electronics may be using? There's an easy way to find out!

Dakota Electric provides 27 Kill A Watt™ meters through Dakota County's library system. Members may check out a meter to measure power consumption of appliances and electronics to determine the actual cost of power consumed.

Simply follow the instructions and plug the meter into a regular 120-volt outlet and plug an appliance into the meter. The unit will project the cost of continued use of an appliance in time periods of hour, day, week, month and year.

For more information:

- Visit the Energy Efficiency section at www.dakotaelectric.com.
- Library locations and hours available at www.co.dakota.mn.us/library.



Don't fall for scammers pretending to be utilities.

Gas and electric utility companies across the United States and Canada as well as the Better Business Bureau of Minnesota (BBB) are joining forces to protect customers from long-running scams targeting customers of utility service providers.

Reports of phone, email billing and door-to-door scams are back again and represent thousands of dollars lost by customer victims.

"These schemes often ramp up with the change in seasons," said Dana Badgerow, president and CEO of the BBB of Minnesota and North Dakota. "Like most scams, it plays on peoples' fears and has proven to be quite effective, unfortunately."

During the phone scam, a customer receives a phone call from an individual who falsely claims to be a utility representative. The scammer warns that the utility will disconnect the customer's electric or natural gas service if the customer fails to make a payment — usually within a short timeframe.

Scammers have even duplicated utilities' telephone messages and automated response systems so when customers call phone numbers provided by the scammer it sounds legitimate. Some of these scammers also use caller ID spoofing to replicate utilities' customer service numbers.

Do not fall victim to these scams. See page 5 for red flags to watch for and how to protect yourself.



Minnesota utilities, including Dakota Electric, participated in the first national Utilities United Against Scams (UUAS) event last November. Joe Miller, Dakota Electric's public relations director, spoke at the UUAS press conference urging customers to beware of utility scams. UUAS is a collaborative effort among the electric, gas and water utility industries to help customers learn how to identify and avoid utility-related scams.

2017 Energy-Efficiency Rebates

Members can view complete rebate details and print a rebate application by visiting either the Residential or Business tab at www.dakotaelectric.com, then choosing Programs & Rebates. Funds are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis and are subject to change without notice. For more information, call the Energy Experts® at 651-463-6243. Watch for your residential rebate booklet or commercial program guide arriving in the mail soon!

Heating & Cooling		
Heat Pump Systems	Tune-up	\$25
	Ductless air-source heat pump	\$300
	Air-source heat pump SEER 13-16+	Up to \$630
	Ground-source heat pump	\$400 / ton
Central Air Conditioner	Tune-up	\$25
	Central air conditioner SEER 13-16+	Up to \$330
Cycled Air Conditioning®	Monthly bill credit for participating heat pump systems and central air conditioners	\$13 ea. June, July & Aug.
Electric Thermal Storage Heating System	Installed on Energy Wise® storage program	\$50 / kw
ECM Furnace Motor	Purchase new furnace with ECM motor or add it to existing furnace	\$100
Appliances		
Dehumidifier	Must be ENERGY STAR® rated	\$25
Refrigerator	Must be ENERGY STAR rated. Requires recycling of the replaced unit	\$75
Freezer	Must be ENERGY STAR rated. Requires recycling of the replaced unit	\$75
Working Refrigerator/Freezer Harvest (recycling only)	Does not require purchase of a new ENERGY STAR appliance; must be in working order.	\$75
Electric Clothes Dryer	Must be ENERGY STAR rated.	\$75
Water Heaters		
Heat Pump Water Heater	Must be ENERGY STAR rated	\$500
Electric Water Heater	New construction installation: high-efficient, large capacity electric water heater controlled on Energy Wise off-peak program.	\$400
	Replacement of non-controlled electric water heater with high-efficient, large capacity electric water heater controlled on Energy Wise off-peak program.	\$400
Interruptible Electric Water Heating	Installed on Energy Wise interruptible program	\$100
Lighting		
LEDs	ENERGY STAR rated (encouraged)	Up to \$3 / bulb
CFLs	ENERGY STAR rated	Up to \$1 / bulb
LED Yard Light (member-owned)	LED light fixture	\$30
Misc.		
Pool Pump Variable Speed Motor	Must be ENERGY STAR rated	\$200
Heat Pump Pool Heater	Coefficient of Performance (COP) of 5.0	\$400
Electric Vehicle Charger Installation	Level 1 and Level 2 chargers qualify	Up to \$500
Solar Installation	Monthly payment based on kilowatt-hour (kWh) production as recorded by Dakota Electric's production meter.	\$0.50/watt of installed solar, not to exceed \$4K.
ENERGY STAR New Home Construction	Consultation services on building an energy-efficient new home & available rebates	\$500
Commercial & Agricultural Rebates		
Custom EnergyGrant® For unique, industry-specific projects not covered by other rebates, such as:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy management systems (EMS) • Data center efficiency improvements • Process improvements • Energy recovery ventilators • Window film 	
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New construction lighting • Induction or LED projects • LED traffic lights • Retrofit lighting upgrade 	
Motors and Drives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variable frequency drives (VFD) • Premium efficiency motors 	
Heating, Cooling and Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tune-ups • Ground-source heat pumps • Air-source heat pumps • Central air conditioners • Cooling equipment (chillers, cooling towers, etc.) 	
Agricultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy-efficient lighting • Ventilation fans • Microzone control systems • Dairy programs • VFD for irrigation systems 	
Commercial Kitchens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convection ovens • Holding cabinets 	
Electric Forklifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class 1 electric indoor/outdoor forklifts • Class 2 indoor narrow-aisle forklifts 	

Employees raise more than \$25,000 for local charities

During the 2016 Dakota Cares Campaign, Dakota Electric employees raised more than \$25,000 for local charities including the Greater Twin Cities United Way®, Community Health Charities® of Minnesota and the Fallen Linemen Organization.

The Dakota Cares committee plans several employee events and activities throughout the year to help raise funds for local organizations. Some of the activities in 2016 included a pork chop feed, fajita feed, silent auction, sporting-clays fun shoot and other activities. Employees also have the option to contribute through payroll deductions each year.



"Each year I am humbled by the generosity of our employees," said Julie Simonsen, committee chair. "Through this team effort, we have demonstrated that 'Dakota Cares.'"



Dakota Cares committee members pictured (L-R): Tom Riste, Mel Belschner, Corey Willert, Cherry Jordan, Jackie Bauer, Julie Simonsen (chair), Dave Reinke, Susan Strong and Bernie Kolnberger. Not pictured: Jodi Schilling.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heating your living space uses more energy than any other system in your home — typically making up about 42 percent of your utility bill. By combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings, you can save about 30 percent on your energy bill.

-Source: Energy.gov



Red flags for scam activity

- The scammer tells the customer his or her account is past due and service will be disconnected if a large payment isn't made — usually within less than an hour.
- The scammer instructs the customer to purchase a prepaid debit or credit card — widely available at retail stores — then instructs the customer to call back to supposedly make a payment to the utility.

How to protect yourself

- Utilities never ask or require a customer with a past-due account to purchase a prepaid debit card to avoid disconnection.
- Customers with past-due accounts receive an advance disconnection notification by mail — not a single notification one hour before disconnection.
- Know which utility providers serve you.
- If you suspect someone is trying to scam you, hang up and call your utility at the phone number listed on your bill and report it to the Better Business Bureau (BBB). Never dial the phone number the scammers provide.
- Customers who suspect or experience fraud, or feel threatened during contact with one of these scams, should contact local authorities.

In 2014, Minnesota utilities joined forces with the BBB to launch "Slam the Scam" — a coalition and awareness campaign aimed at warning customers and preventing scams. The coalition is encouraging customers who think they are being targeted by a scammer to simply end the conversation and "slam" down the phone.



Applications being accepted for the **2017 NRECA Youth Tour**

Dakota Electric will send five local high school juniors or seniors to Washington, D.C. as part of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Youth Tour.

This year's trip will take place June 10-15 and is sure to be an experience of a lifetime.

- Join hundreds of young people from across the country.
- Visit historic monuments and museums.
- Meet with your U.S. representatives and senators.

How to apply

Visit www.dakotaelectric.com and click on Safety and Education > Teachers and Kids > Washington, D.C. Youth Tour to download an informational brochure and print an application, or ask your high school guidance counselor for an application.

Application deadline is Feb. 21. Students must be available for an in-person interview in mid-March. Applicant's household must be a member of Dakota Electric Association.



Paid Advertisements: For more information about advertising in *Circuits* call 651-463-6270.

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Circuits Quick Clips

Your Electricity 2016 brochure available

As a cooperative business, one of Dakota Electric's founding principles is to provide members with information about their cooperative.

The most recent information on how the electric generation, transmission and distribution systems work, plus the sources, costs and emissions of fuels used in meeting the needs of Dakota Electric's members, is available by visiting www.dakotaelectric.com > Safety and Education > Electricity 101.

Members may also request a copy of the brochure be mailed to them by calling 651-463-6212.



Notice to cogenerators

In compliance with Minnesota Rules Relating to Cogeneration and Small Power Production, Chapter 7835, Dakota Electric Association is required to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers that satisfy the conditions of a qualifying facility.

Dakota Electric will provide free information to all interested members regarding rates and interconnection requirements. An interconnection application is required and subject to approval from the cooperative before a qualifying facility interconnects and operates in parallel with the cooperative's distribution system.

Any disputes over interconnections, sales and purchases are subject to resolution by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

[For more details](#)

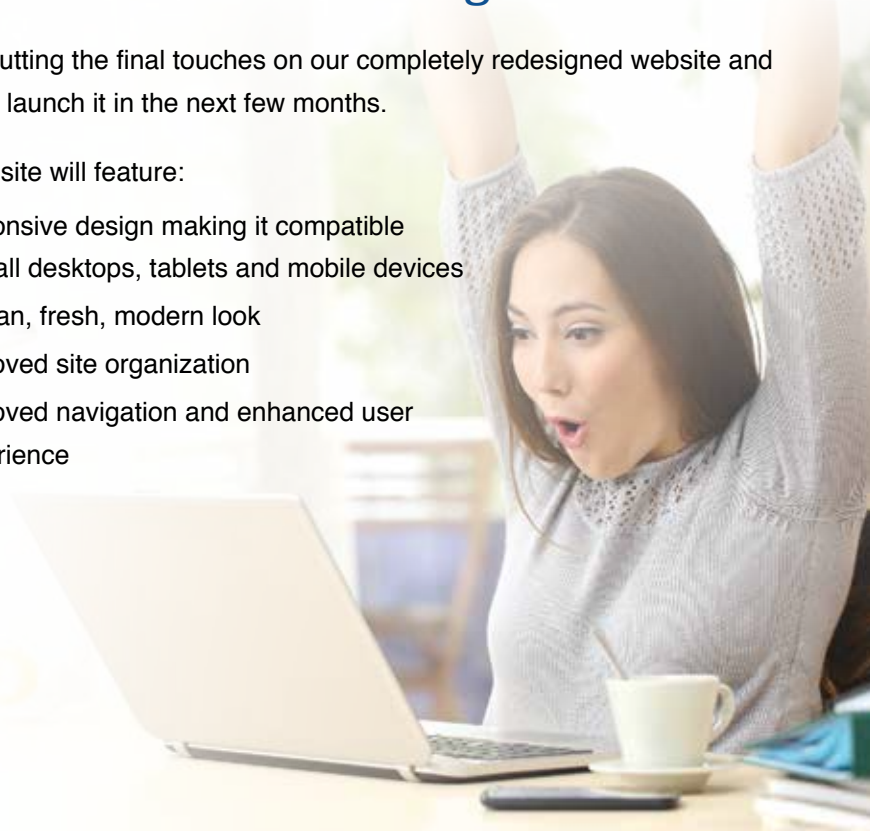
Visit www.dakotaelectric.com or call Mike Plutowski at 651-463-6180.

Coming Soon! Dakota Electric launching new website

We are putting the final touches on our completely redesigned website and expect to launch it in the next few months.

The new site will feature:

- responsive design making it compatible with all desktops, tablets and mobile devices
- a clean, fresh, modern look
- improved site organization
- improved navigation and enhanced user experience



Board of Directors

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John (Jack) DeYoe
David Jones, Treasurer
Gerald F. Pittman, Vice Chair

District 2

Janet L. Lekson, MREA Director
Jim Sheldon, Chair
Clay Van De Bogart, Great River
Energy Director

District 3

Kenneth H. Danner
William F. Holton
Margaret D. Schreiner, Great River
Energy Director

District 4

Paul Bakken
Judy H. Kimmes
Paul A. Trapp, Secretary



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Greg Miller, President & CEO

Tanya Wolfs, Editor



4300 220th Street West
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Happy New Year! SAVE NOW TO SAVE LATER.

With rebates on everything from LED light bulbs to ground-source heat pumps, it's easy and cost effective to make your home more energy efficient. Being an electric co-op member pays off.

See page 4 for a list of this year's energy-efficiency rebates. Contact Dakota Electric at 651-463-6243 or visit dakotaelectric.com for more information.

Contact Us

Member service & drive-up window
7 a.m. – 7 p.m. Monday - Friday
651-463-6212 or 1-800-874-3409
Minnesota Relay Service 711

Lobby 7 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday
4300 220th Street West, Farmington, MN 55024

24-hour outage & emergency service
651-463-6201 or 1-800-430-9722

Underground cable locations
Gopher State One Call 811 or 651-454-0002 or
1-800-252-1166

Tree trimming & street lights 651-463-6287

Dakota Electric is an equal opportunity/
affirmative action employer

www.dakotaelectric.com
customerservice@dakotaelectric.com



Program information and offers in this newsletter
are subject to change without notice.

REBATES SOME
UP TO \$630

EnergyWiseMN.com